

# Smarter Balanced Opinion Writing Rubric (Grades 3–5)

Sample Generic 4-point Opinion Writing Rubric (Grades 3–5)				
Score	Statement of Purpose/Focus and Organization		Development: Language and Elaboration of Evidence	
	Statement of Purpose/Focus	Organization	Elaboration of Evidence	Language and Vocabulary
4	<p>The response is fully sustained and consistently and purposefully focused:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>opinion is clearly stated, focused, and strongly maintained</li> <li>opinion is communicated clearly within the context</li> </ul>	<p>The response has a clear and effective organizational structure creating unity and completeness:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>effective, consistent use of a variety of transitional strategies</li> <li>logical progression of ideas from beginning to end</li> <li>effective introduction and conclusion for audience and purpose</li> </ul>	<p>The response provides thorough and convincing support/evidence for the writer's opinion that includes the effective use of sources, facts, and details:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>use of evidence from sources is smoothly integrated, comprehensive, and relevant</li> <li>effective use of a variety of elaborative techniques</li> </ul>	<p>The response clearly and effectively expresses ideas, using precise language:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>use of academic and domain-specific vocabulary is clearly appropriate for the audience and purpose</li> </ul>
				<p>The response demonstrates a strong command of conventions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>few, if any, errors in usage and sentence formation</li> <li>effective and consistent use of punctuation, capitalization, and spelling</li> </ul>

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3	<p>The response is adequately sustained and generally focused:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>opinion is clear and for the most part maintained, though some loosely related material may be present</li> <li>context provided for the claim is adequate</li> </ul>	<p>The response has an recognizable organizational structure, though there may be minor flaws and some ideas may be loosely connected:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>adequate use of transitional strategies with some variety</li> <li>adequate progression of ideas from beginning to end</li> <li>adequate introduction and conclusion</li> </ul>	<p>The response provides adequate support/evidence for the writer's opinion that includes the use of sources, facts, and details:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>some evidence from sources is integrated, though citations may be general or imprecise</li> <li>adequate use of some elaborative techniques</li> </ul>	<p>The response adequately expresses ideas, employing a mix of precise with more general language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>use of domain-specific vocabulary is generally appropriate for the audience and purpose</li> </ul>	<p>The response demonstrates an adequate command of conventions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>some errors in usage and sentence formation are present, but no systematic pattern of errors is displayed</li> <li>adequate use of punctuation, capitalization, and spelling</li> </ul>

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2	<p>The response is somewhat sustained with some extraneous material or a minor drift in focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>may be clearly focused on the opinion but is insufficiently sustained</li> <li>opinion on the issue may be unclear and unfocused</li> </ul>	<p>The response has an inconsistent organizational structure, and flaws are evident:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>inconsistent use of transitional strategies with little variety</li> <li>uneven progression of ideas from beginning to end</li> <li>conclusion and introduction, if present, are weak</li> </ul>	<p>The response provides uneven, cursory support/evidence for the writer's opinion that includes partial or uneven use of sources, facts, and details:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>evidence from sources is weakly integrated, and citations, if present, are uneven</li> <li>weak or uneven use of elaborative techniques</li> </ul>	<p>The response expresses ideas unevenly, using simplistic language:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>use of domain-specific vocabulary that may at times be inappropriate for the audience and purpose</li> </ul>
				<p>The response demonstrates a partial command of conventions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>frequent errors in usage may obscure meaning</li> <li>inconsistent use of punctuation, capitalization, and spelling</li> </ul>

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1	<p>The response may be related to the purpose but may offer little or no focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• may be very brief</li> <li>• may have a major drift</li> <li>• opinion may be confusing or ambiguous</li> </ul>	<p>The response has little or no discernible organizational structure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• few or no transitional strategies are evident</li> <li>• frequent extraneous ideas may intrude</li> </ul>	<p>The response provides minimal support/evidence for the writer's opinion that includes little or no use of sources, facts, and details:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• use of evidence from sources is minimal, absent, in error, or irrelevant</li> </ul>	<p>The response expression of ideas is vague, lacks clarity, or is confusing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• uses limited language or domain-specific vocabulary</li> <li>• may have little sense of audience and purpose</li> </ul>
0	A response gets no credit if it provides no evidence of the ability to [fill in with key language from the intended target].			
	<p>The response demonstrates a lack of command of conventions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• errors are frequent and severe and meaning is often obscured</li> </ul>			